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BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

IDOWANNA

A Play for Children in One Act

By

DOROTHY WALDO

*Author of "Kid Curlers," "A Full House,"
"Sylvia's Aunts," etc.*

NOTICE TO PROFESSIONALS

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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1919

RE 657
11/25/1965

IDOWANNA

CHARACTERS

AMY GIRL.

NURSE.

I-DON'T-WANT-TO, who usually appears as "Idowanna."

COFFEE-POT.

KNIFE.

BREAD.

I WILL.

All but the first two parts may be played by boys or girls.

SCENE.—A nursery.

TIME IN PLAYING.—Twenty minutes.



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Idowanna

The scene opens in a nursery, with a table laid for breakfast in c., up stage. AMY GIRL is standing in c., down stage, with NURSE putting the finishing touches on her toilet. AMY is a little girl, but not too little; in fact, she is almost ready to graduate from the nursery to the mysterious land of down-stairs-for-all-your-meals. On this particular morning, she has unfortunately and evidently gotten out the wrong side of bed.

AMY (*yawning*). Oh, I don't see why I had to get up! I'm so sleepy!

NURSE. Now, Miss Amy, don't be acting like a bear with a sore thumb just because you got out the wrong side of bed. If you was a little poor child —

AMY. I'm so sick of hearing about a little poor child! I'm not a little poor child, and I don't have to support my father and mother and seven little brothers and sisters, and I don't see why I should get up if I don't want to!

NURSE. Well, you're up now, anyways, and I don't suppose you'll want to be going back to bed out of spite. So come here now, and let me tie this pritty yeller ribbon on your hair.

AMY. I don't want to wear that ribbon. I want to wear the old rose one.

NURSE. Oh, come now, darlin'; you know your daddy likes this because it just matches the green on your little dress. Then we'll have some nice breakfast.

AMY. I won't wear that ribbon, and I don't want any breakfast. Nothing but old bread and coffee and stuff.

NURSE. Oh! Oh! Oh! and wasn't the fizzlegy teacher only yesterday telling you with her own ears to

keep your indigestions working? How can you keep 'em working without nothing to work with?

AMY. I don't care, I shan't eat any breakfast if I don't want to!

NURSE. Now, Miss Amy, whatever has got into you this morning! On your birthday too!

AMY. That's just it—on my birthday! I just have to spend my whole life being made to do things I don't want to! When I am grown up, I shan't do one single thing I don't want, want, want to!

NURSE. Not even when your old nurse —

AMY. Old nurse! What's an old nurse but the person who is hired to make you do what you don't want to?

NURSE (*angry at last*). Very well, Miss, I tell you one thing. When you get that world of yours, you won't have anybody to be your nurse if nobody has to do anything she doesn't want to! Now you can just stay here all alone while I go tell your mother that a horrid naughty Johnny Jones lives here, and not her little daughter at all!

[Exit NURSE, in high dudgeon.

AMY. Now she's mad and gone to tattle, and I never did a thing! I don't care! On my birthday, too! But I don't want to be up. Still, I don't want to go to bed. I don't want to be hungry, though,—but I don't want to eat that old breakfast! I don't want to, I don't want to, I don't want to! (*She has spoken the last sentence very fast, without a pause. As she finishes the last word, a curious figure suddenly appears. He is I-DON'T-WANT-To, and he wears a parti-colored fool's costume. His ears and hands are little balloons, and flap when he walks.* AMY, a bit frightened.) Where did you come from? Why are you here?

(Wherever he is, I-DON'T-WANT-To makes himself thoroughly at home, and a bit disagreeable. Even as he talks to AMY, he clammers about the room, rocking the chairs and tweaking AMY's hair.)

I-DON'T-WANT-To. I'm Idowanna. You called me.

AMY. Oh, no, I never —

IDO. Yes, you did. Any girl who calls me three times on her birthday without breathing between, gets me.

AMY. But you look so queer! What—what will happen?

IDO. Stupid, just what you said. Nothing you don't want to!

AMY. You mean I don't have to do anything I don't want to all day long?

IDO. That's the cheese! As long as I'm here, you don't have to, nor nobody else don't neither.

AMY. How wonderful! All day! What'll I do first? Guess I'll eat my breakfast. Won't you have some bread or a cup of coffee or something?

IDO. Nope. I've done et mine.

AMY. That isn't very good grammar.

IDO. Sure, I know ut.

AMY. Well, if you know it, why don't you talk good grammar?

IDO. 'Cause idowanna. Anyhow, it's pa's fault. His name was Didn't-Want-To, but he's past and gone. Anyhow, he didn't want to learn me nothin'.

(IDO. *lies flat on his back with his legs in the air in just such a position as to be very much in AMY's way.*)

AMY. Well, I don't think it sounds very well, but if you don't want to I suppose it's all right. Now would you mind getting up so I can get my breakfast?

IDO. Naw.

AMY. I think you are mean. Why not?

IDO. (*rolling over on one elbow, and sticking out his tongue disagreeably*). 'Cause idowanna, see? An' I got a brother named Iwon't. He's lots bigger and crosser than me; I'm sweet natured, I am.

AMY. I'll call nurse, and she'll make you get up. She could make your big brother too, even if he got right down on the floor.

IDO. Sure she could, but she won't come.

AMY. She always does.

IDO. Yeah, up till to-day. But to-day she don't hafta if she donwanna.

AMY. Very well, then, stay where you are, hateful. I'm going to have some coffee. (*She climbs over Ido, who grabs at her ankles, and goes up to the breakfast table. On it are a coffee cup and pot, a knife, and a nice homely loaf of bread. She reaches out her hand to pick up the coffee-pot, but it suddenly rolls out of her reach and falls on the floor. This is accomplished by tying a bit of white thread to the handle of the pot, and running it through a double-headed tack stuck in the table, down the table leg, and through other double-headed tacks across the floor and off stage. Pulling the thread jerks the pot out of place very easily.*) Oh, oh, what happened? I didn't even touch it.

IDO. I guess he don' wanna be drunk up to-day. (*AMY puts her hand upon the loaf of bread, which jerks away from her. She attempts to pick up the knife and the same thing happens.*) He won't be cut, nor he do the cutting. They don't none of them seem to want to do nothing, and they don't have to for you to-day.

AMY. But can't I have any breakfast?

IDO. Not if they don't want to give it to you.

AMY. There's some oatmeal there; I hate that, but I suppose I could eat it. Would it let me?

IDO. Oh, I don't expect old oatmeal would move. He's a lazy cuss. All he wants is to lie still in a dish and get sticky.

AMY. Oh, how horrid you are! I wish you hadn't come!

IDO. Isn't that just like the fickleness of women? An hour ago you were planning to spend your life with me, and now you "hate me."

AMY. Well, but I didn't think —

IDO. Of course not—just like a woman.

AMY. But I didn't know that everything else wouldn't do what it didn't want to either!

(*AMY is almost on the edge of tears.*)

IDO. There you go again, just like a —

AMY. Oh, will you keep still! I'm not a woman;

I'm just a little girl, and I want my b-b-breakfast. Mother! Mother!

IDO. No use calling her, she won't come.

AMY (*very sad indeed*). Doesn't she want to either?

IDO. Of course she does. Mothers is awful poor fools. But she ain't let.

AMY. Who ain't—isn't letting her?

(*At this inquiry, Ido. glances in startled fashion about the room. Then he shakes himself and shudders, answering with his finger on his lips.*)

IDO. Sh! Sh! I can't tell you. (*He goes up very close to whisper in her ear.*) He's the only thing on earth I am afraid of!

AMY. Oh, is he very terrible? He must be if he can keep my mother away from me!

IDO. Horrible! He's killed hundreds of my little brothers and sisters. My twin brother dassent even stay in the room with him, and I'm not overly fond of being near him myself.

AMY. Oh, I don't want to see him.

IDO. That's the talk. Of course you don't. You'd ruther play with me; I'm a nice feller, I am, and you'd hate him. He'd boss you all around.

AMY. But if mother can't come, and nurse won't come, and the food won't be eaten, will I starve? I don't want to starve! I want to keep on having a good time not doing anything I don't want to!

IDO. You betcha! It's a great life if you don't weaken! But I warn you of one thing—all the things that don't have to do nothing they don't want to, will be around to have you entertain them. Here come some of them now.

(*BREAD, KNIFE, and COFFEE-POT enter. These are flat cardboard figures with human heads, hands and feet. They walk sideways, keeping their fronts always to the audience.*)

AMY. What shall I say to them? Are they mad at me? What shall I do? Please tell me what to do!

IDO. Naw, idowanna.

COFFEE (*wiping his forehead*). Whew! I'm hot!

BREAD. Simply baked!

AMY. Won't you sit down and cool off?

COFFEE. Thanks, I'm always better if I stand a while in a cool place. It clears my brain. I'm grateful to you, Miss, for freeing us to-day. I was getting pretty badly strained shut up so long.

BREAD (*who speaks always in a rather slow voice*). Yes, and if you had risen as early as I did this morning —

KNIFE (*whose voice is rather sharp and nasal*). Yes, before you were light!

COFFEE. Oh, shut up, Knife, with your sharp remarks, you make me boil.

AMY (*who has been watching them timidly, now becoming afraid as the three glower at each other*). Oh, please don't be cross.

BREAD. Don't be afraid, little girl, anybody can settle Coffee. But you must understand that Knife and I have a feud of many years standing. It began so long ago that we don't remember what it was about, but of course we keep it up just the same. My family considers him very dull.

KNIFE. That may be, but my family has cut his wherever they've met for generations.

BREAD (*a bit miffed*). But you've had to look sharp to do it, just the same.

KNIFE. Well, I notice we don't go stale at the business, like some people I could mention.

COFFEE. Come, come, stop your quarrelling. You don't want to scare the little girl on her birthday. Now I've been standing a while, I feel stronger. Let's do our little dance for her. She set us free for to-day. Come on, Knife.

KNIFE. No, I don't want to just now. You and Bread do it better together. Maybe at the end I'll cut in.

(*They dance a curious, pantomimic dance, with KNIFE, much lighter on his feet than the other two, jumping around them at the end. A good tune is the old Scotch, "The Hundred Pipers."*)

AMY (*standing at one side, and speaking to Ido.*). They don't seem mad at me. They aren't paying any attention to me at all. And I just go on getting hungrier and hungrier. Of course I can't get anything to eat. I wonder if they would mind if I went down to the pantry.

IDO. Naw, they don't care. But the pantry won't help you any.

AMY. But there's lots of food down there.

IDO. Sure, but as soon as you get down there, it won't have to be et, and I'll tell the world that it won't want to.

AMY. But I'll starve.

IDO. Sure you will. Look at all the countries where nobody don't do nothing he don't want to. They're all having a swell starve.

AMY. But isn't there any way out of it?

(*During all the conversation between Amy and Ido, Bread, Knife and Coffee half listen, half follow their own devices.*)

IDO. (*answering Amy reluctantly, with furtive glances about*). Y-Yes.

AMY. Tell me.

IDO. Naw, idowanna.

AMY. You make me perfectly furious. I don't want to is no reason at all. You're just disagreeable.

IDO. You asked me to come to see you. Now you got me here, you got to entertain me.

AMY. But the Bible says —

IDO. My folks don't hold much by the Bible —

AMY. You're a mean old heathen, you are. Bread, Knife, Coffee, won't you help me?

BREAD. Any way we can, lady, that isn't in the eating line.

AMY. Would you let me starve to death?

COFFEE. Oh my, no—you must just train yourself to go without eating. Take me, for instance; I never eat a thing but egg-shells, and every one knows that they aren't edible, so there are no grounds for complaint.

AMY. But I can't eat egg-shells.

COFFEE. Better try it; they settle the stomach.

AMY. I suppose I'll just have to die here all alone. I guess I better finish dressing so they'll be sorry and think how nice I look when they find me here dead. I just hope they're good and sorry. (*She goes over to pick up the hair ribbon which has lain all this time on the floor. It jerks out of her hand.*) Oh, dear!

IDO. She don't want to be worn, I guess.

AMY. I guess it's lucky I have some of my clothes on, or I'd have had to stay in bed.

IDO. I doubt if bed would have you to-day. He'd probably go out for an airing.

AMY. Well, I think ribbon's mean. I won't hurt it—her—by wearing her.

KNIFE. Oh, come now, little girl. If you were a ribbon would you want to be doubled up in a hard knot and bounced up and down on some one's head all day long? It's so much pleasanter to be stretched out in a quiet bureau drawer, doing deep breathing all day long.

AMY. But if food doesn't want to be eaten, and clothes worn —

ALL. They don't have to if they don't want to. You said so.

AMY. Won't any one help—oh, please, won't somebody help me?

ALL. Sh—sh —

AMY. I think you're all horrible. You tell me there's some way to help, and you won't tell me what it is.

IDO. Naw, we don't want to.

AMY. Well, if you think I am going to die to please you, you are all mistaken, for I won't.

IDO. (*speaking flippantly*). Ah there, brother!

AMY. And somehow I'll get something to eat, I will.

(*As she speaks the last word, BREAD, KNIFE, and COFFEE start back, staring at each other in consternation. Table begins to jerk, and IDO. drops to the floor, pricking one of his balloon hands so that it collapses.*)

IDO. Ow! Ow!

AMY. Why, what's the matter?

IDO. Nothing, nothing. Just a little attack of indigestion.

KNIFE (*trying to distract AMY. Table is lumbering in jerks toward the exit*). There goes Table.

AMY. He shan't go; I'll stop him, I will. (*She rushes toward the table, seizes it, and with no difficulty pushes it back into place, where it remains quietly. Ido writhes on the floor, groaning.*) Why, that was as easy as pie. What is the matter, Ido?

IDO. (*speaking with difficulty*). Nothing, nothing, I just don't feel very well.

BREAD (*speaking as if he were scared*). We'd better be going, I think.

(*The others all nod, and they work toward the door.*)

AMY. Oh, no! Please don't leave me alone with Idowanna, I'm afraid of him. (*They hurry out of the door, and she pursues them. Ido pulls himself up to a sitting position, and sits shaking, and feeling of himself. AMY returns, holding in her hands a knife and a loaf of bread.*) They just simply disappeared, and left just these shells of themselves. Bread—are you in there? (*She shakes the loaf, then puts it up to her nose.*) Oh, how good it smells! I do so want a slice. But you can hardly cut up and eat a person you've just been talking to. But I'm so hungry, I just got to have something to eat. Even if I have met you before, Mr. Bread, I'm a desperate woman. I will eat you, I will, I will, I will. (*She utters the last very firmly, and attacks the bread with the knife. At the same moment, Ido howls like a dog and scuttles on all fours under the table, whence he peers out once in a while in terror.* At the same moment, I WILL appears. *He is also in motley costume, but is in manner, motion, and in general alertness in every way the direct opposite of Ido.*) Gracious, how you scared me, Ido; whatever is the matter? Oh! Who—who are you?

I WILL (*speaking pleasantly*). I am your servant. You called me.

AMY. Why, I never saw you before.

I WILL. Yes, you called me. I have always been

your servant, though you haven't used me very much. Usually, of course, you can't see me but you called me three times on your birthday, so I came. What can I do for you?

AMY (*on the edge of tears again*). I'm dreadfully hungry.

I WILL. You have bread and a knife in your hand. Why don't you eat?

AMY (*doubtfully*). Well, I-Don't-Want-To —

I WILL. Oh, yes, he's here, is he? He's the biggest liar alive. Where is he? (*He searches about, finally discovering Ido. under the table.*) Ah, there you are, Ido; no use hiding. Come on out and take what is coming to you.

IDO. (*shrieking*). Idowanna, idowanna, you great big bully.

(I WILL hauls him out from under the table, and they fight. In the quarrel, Ido's balloons are punctured one at a time, and he collapses, kicking.)

I WILL. Don't you bite me, Ido; you know I'm a lot stronger than you are.

IDO. Yes, you mean old butcher. You killed all my little brothers and sisters, and now you're going to spank me. Oh! Oh! Oh!

I WILL. Stop your snivelling, Ido. You aren't worth spanking. Get out! There's no room for both of us here.

(IDO. drags out of the room, turning to stick out his tongue spitefully at I WILL as he goes.)

AMY. Oh, thank you; he was so horrid. But I don't see now how you got rid of him. I was dreadfully afraid of him.

I WILL. But you were the person who did get rid of him.

AMY. I?

I WILL. To be sure. Certainly. You mentioned my name and he yelled. He always does. If you say I am one of your servants, he clears out.

AMY. Why didn't you come sooner?

I WILL. You didn't call me.

AMY. But you might have come without calling.

I WILL. We can't. You see, it's one of our laws, that we mustn't come unless we are called. Then, we come at once. But I tell you what I did do for you. Do you remember that your mother didn't come when you called?

AMY. Yes.

I WILL. Yes. That was because her I Will and I got together, and made a plot. You see, her I Will wouldn't let her come when you called because we hoped that then you would call me. You really don't need an I Will much when you have a mother. She does everything for you. It worked, too. But now come on. Won't you heat up the toaster and have some nice hot toast for breakfast?

AMY. Yes, indeed, I will, I will, I will.

CURTAIN

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Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

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HARRY BROWN, a tenant.

JOHN GLEASON, an insurance agent.

TOM CARSON, reporter on "Boston American."

MCCARTHY, police officer.

MRS. MONTFORD, the landlord's wife.

MRS. MURPHY, the janitor's wife.

ROSIE MURPHY, their little girl.

MRS. BROWN

MRS. GRAY

MRS. JONES

MRS. SMITH

HELEN DEARBORNE, Mrs. Gray's sister.

} tenants.

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The Minute Man			13	1 1/2	"
Mose	11	10	1 1/2	"	15c
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